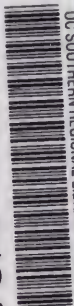


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"SHE TOLD HER INCANTATIONS THERE."

[Frontispiece.]

ONTI ORA.

A METRICAL ROMANCE.

BY
M. B. M. TOLAND,
AUTHOR OF "SIR RAE," "IRIS," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM DESIGNS BY W. L. SHEPARD.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
1881.

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TO THE MEMORY

OF MY LATE HUSBAND,

HUGH HUGER TOLAND, M.D.,

AT WHOSE SUGGESTION IT WAS BEGUN, BY WHOSE SIDE IT WAS MOSTLY

WRITTEN, AND WHOSE APPROVAL HAS FURNISHED THE

STRONGEST INDUCEMENT FOR ITS COMPLETION,

THIS POEM

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

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ONTI ORA.

WHEN searching for this book a name,
 Onti Ora,*—"clouds of the sky,"
Under my weary glances came
 And lent its aid to mystify.

* The Indian name for the Catskill Mountains.—See *Lippincott's Magazine*,
August, 1879.

ONTIORA.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

ON Adirondacks' Highlands gray
The Hudson River finds a source,
And winds its wild, romantic way
Through varied scenes along its course.
Pictured upon its surface clear
The borrowed tints of the blue sky,
In mirrored landscapes all appear,
From valleys fair to mountains high.

II.

Where the famed Catskills on the west
Are like enchanted castles seen,
The river with a broader breast
Flows on its lovely banks between.
The old estates that fringe the shore,
The mansions proud that on them stood,
A look of princely grandeur wore,
With cultured grounds and park and wood.

III.

'Twas early June; a shower of rain
In torrents fell with splash and dash;
A seething flood each window-pane,
A mimic fall from every sash.
Trees spread their boughs as if to fling
The blinding strands of silver spray,—
As wild birds plume their dripping wing,
And dip and skip in bathing play.

IV.

The mountain peaks were veiled from sight
By lowering clouds, that round them hung



"On Adirondacks' Highlands gray."

Like thunder-scabbards, black as night,
From which the swords of lightning sprung.

Hoarse muttered curses, low and deep,
Storm demons raving in despair,
And groans and sighs appeared to sweep
Down from the conflict raging there.

V.

Cold grew the shadows on the hills,
And fainter gleamed the light of day,
Like eddies on the mountain rills,
Dissolved in farewell beams away.
More wildly raged the wailing blast
And driving sleet like ocean foam,
Over a stately mansion cast,
That stood amid the deepening gloam.

VI.

Within a spacious library,
On every side by books enframed,
Their antique bindings, vellum gray,—
The works of classic authors famed,—

Law, science, literature, and art,—
In cases carved of oaken wood,
Crowding the shelves on every part,
Ranged with imposing titles stood.

VII.

Judge Lee Von Emich reading sat,
While near him dozed his gentle dame;
Beside the hearth a Maltese cat
With wonder watched the sparks inflame,
The marks of her wild madcap play
Madam Von Emich's knitting bore;
A tangled mass of worsted lay
With needles strewn upon the floor.

VIII.

The judge, a man of middle age,
Was poring o'er some law debate;
Slowly he studied every page,
For it concerned affairs of state.

His brow, the index of his mind,
Was furrowed with deep lines of care;
His well-formed features, calm, refined,
Illumed with light of genius rare.

IX.

Remote from them, in softened light,
With half-reclining girlish grace,
Stood a young maiden tall and slight,—
Of noble mien and winning face
And mild alluring comeliness;
Her warm dark waving chestnut hair
In Grecian bands confined, each tress
Rippled in golden halos fair.

X.

With saddened lustre shone her eyes,
Large, dreamy, shaded deepest blue,
Like veil of night on summer skies
With brilliant starlight gleaming through.



"HIS JEALOUS ANGER'S FLASHING LIGHT."

Repelled by the uncourteous mien
Of one beside her,—with affright
She had in his dark glances seen
His jealous anger's flashing light.

XI.

Leon de Maury was the name
Of our young hero. He could trace
From Norman root well known to fame
His lineage high, his knightly race.
His father, Judge Von Emich's friend
And neighbor, socially lived near,
Leon his evenings there would spend:
A welcome guest, and none more dear.

XII.

Edith, their daughter, his first love,—
Betrothed were they, and not a cloud
Had interposed its shade to prove
That perfect bliss is not allowed,

Until the coming of their guest,
Whose courtly grace and gallantry
The bane instilled in Leon's breast,
And whet the fang of jealousy.

XIII.

Hence came this quarrel: her reply
Was blended with love-glances kind,—
“Leon!” she said, “the gloomy sky
Or this fierce storm o’erclouds your mind.
Frowning! not so would cousin John
Return my greeting, rueful knight!
Fie, Leon! Tell me, have I done
Aught to provoke this sullen plight?”

XIV.

He answered sharply,—“Since he came—
This Southern hero—all the time
You dwell upon his saintly name.
John *this*, John *that*, in ceaseless chime;

And I am ever forced to hear
A rival's deeds of valor sung
By lips that once to me were dear,
When love on every accent hung."

XV.

"Leon, beware!" she cried; "to me
Your words are undeserved,—unjust,—
Uttered in cruel mockery,—
There is no cause for this distrust.
The rights of hospitality
And kindred love, to him are due;
He is above your jealousy—
Nor will I suffer it from you.

XVI.

"Take back your ring and vows; they prove
But galling fetters to enchain
A plighted troth, devoid of love;
Take them and go!—be free again."

She stood with feeling ill suppressed :
Her wounded pride she would assuage ;—
With yearning heart, and heaving breast,
She tendered him love's golden gage.

XVII.

He waved the ring off with his hand,—
The precious gem fell to the floor.
“Edith!” he cried, “you can't command
A heart that loves to love no more.”
His words were spoken bitterly,—
“Edith, forgive, if I have erred ;
I will not be,—I am not free ;—
Speak ! say I have not rightly heard.

XVIII.

“Pause, Edith, ere it be too late,—
We are betrothed, and must not break
Nor tangle thus the web of fate ;—
From this delusion bid me wake.

Silent! Oh, shame! a coquette then,
False, fickle, trifling, heartless one,
To harvest thus the love of men,—
Your conquests have but just begun.

XIX.

“Edith, ’tis strange that one so fair
Such false pretences e’er could nurse,
For ’tis dishonor thus to snare
A trusting heart. Oh, God! the curse
To waken from a blissful dream
And find my hopes dispelled and dead,
Your promises a mocking theme
Of pleasantry in jesting said.

XX.

“Farewell! God grant through future years
On you no waking grief may fall,
And blend your life with bitter tears,
And blighted hopes your heart impall.”

He paused one moment, then was gone,
The fiercely-raging storm to brave,—
Nor cared he as he struggled on
His blighted, weary life to save.

XXI.

The judge had finished his debate,
Madam Von Emich had rewound
Her tangled wool. The hour was late,
The fire had burned to ashy mound.
Trembling and pale, Edith drew near.
“Father!” she cried, “Leon has gone,—
Gone never to return, I fear,—
My taunting words the wrong have done.”

XXII.

The judge exclaimed, “Edith!—in tears!
My child, I do not understand
This lovers’ quarrel; cease your fears.
Leon will not renounce your hand;

He's noble, brave, and must be true,
His spirit proud; but I am sure
By early morn he'll visit you;
His anger will not long endure."

XXIII.

Her mother whispered, "Do not mind
This little trial in your way;
Misunderstandings we all find,
Like cloudlets on the fairest day."
Edith, relieved by what they said,
Made her affectionate adieu,—
All anger from her thoughts had fled,
And left her love unchanged and true.

XXIV.

Louder the deafening thunder pealed
In crashing din the mansion o'er;
The lurid lightning's flame revealed
The slighted bauble on the floor.

Edith replaced the pledge of love
Upon her finger with a kiss,
And silent prayer that it would prove
Auspicious of her future bliss.

CANTO SECOND.

I.

MORNING awoke; a golden sheen
Of sunshine flooded mount and vale;



“ From primrose cups and daisies pale.”

It drank the drops from foliage green,
From primrose cups and daisies pale,

And stole from webs of gossamer
Their tiny beads of pearly dew,
Without a zephyr's breath to stir
The fairy meshes stranded through.

II.

Edith from troubled dreams arose
With aching heart and weary brain;
She wandered forth to seek repose,
Her wonted spirits to regain.
Through deep ravines, 'neath shadows gray
Of latticed boughs and trailing vines,
Where sunbeams seldom found their way
To sport in bright prismatic lines.

III.

By the pure air refreshed, at last
She paused, debating her return.
A flock of pigeons fluttered past;
What startled them she could not learn,

Till in the path before her stood
A woman in a foreign guise,
Who looked the genius of the wood
In her strange garb of many dyes.

IV.

Surprised, bewildered, Edith gazed
Like mountain fawn; from sudden fright
She trembled, panting and amazed,
As the strange figure met her sight.
A hat of straw with drooping plumes
Sat jauntily upon her head;
Her garments, silk from India's looms,
A rich and golden lustre shed.

V.

Hers was a tawny beauty rare,
With head erect and stately mien,
And large black eyes and raven hair,—
The faultless type of gypsy queen.

Edith by instinct maidenly,
Attracted to a face so mild,
Regained her native courtesy,
And on the wandering stranger smiled.

VI.

Then quickly o'er the gypsy's face
Rippled a genial answering glance :
"Lady!" she said, "thy winsome grace
And loveliness all hearts entrance.
Thy fortune, lady, let me tell ;
I joy to read a fate like thine ;
Thy future life I know as well
As gifts of prophecy divine.

VII.

"Here, place thy little hand in mine ;
Now cross the palm with coin of gold ;
'Twill make the planets brighter shine
Through which thy horoscope is told."

Long gazed she on the shapely hand
That nestled coyly in her own,
Studied each line and threaded strand,
Until they all to her were known.

VIII.

She said, "I see thy childhood's dream
Of joy and gladness glide away,—
Unruffled was life's placid stream
Until the eve of yesterday.
Venus and Mercury have told
Of him thy lover, brave and good;
He has been jealous, proud and cold;—
That, lady, you have understood.

IX.

"Ah! here are clouds; nay, mind them not,
My charm can drive them all away;
And here I see a darker spot -
Obscure the brightness of thy day.

I am a gypsy: in our God
My faith is firm; this gift he gave
That, as through life I onward plod,
Some few from peril I might save.

X.

“I, Sibyl Metis, have the power,—
A talismanic charm of gold,—
To grant to thee a blissful dower
And with delight thy heart enfold.
Give me a gem, some jewel rare;
My amulet will work the spell
With aid of thy two planets, where
The reading of thy fate I tell.”

XI.

Edith from out her girdle drew
Her purse, and coin of gold she pressed
Within the gypsy's palm, that true
Might prove the promises expressed.

“See! thus I make a mystic sign,”
The sibyl said; “repeat with me
The magic spell, that bliss be thine
When I shall solve thy destiny.”

XII.

In dialect of Romani
She told her incantations there,
While Edith’s whispers timidly
Fell like response to murmured prayer.
With curious signs the gypsy placed
An amulet in Edith’s hand,
A plaid of many colors traced
Over a well-filled tiny band.

XIII.

“The clouds that now obscure thy sky
In time will all have cleared away,
For in the future I descry
The sunshine of thy wedding-day.

Thy lines of life are strangely laid,
Deep mystery all blended through;
Whatever comes, be not dismayed;
Have faith,—be strong! Lady, adieu!"

XIV.

Edith, her fortune told, returned,
Excitement beaming in her eyes;
Her cheeks with mantling blushes burned,
That half betrayed her late surprise.
The breakfast hour was nearly o'er,—
"Ah! here you come!" her father said;
"I searched for you two miles or more,
Will-o'-the-wisp, such ways you led."

XV.

Madam Von Enich smiling sat
Over the breakfast to preside,
Not e'en forgetting "Flo," the cat,
That watched for crumbs her chair beside.

Edith was troubled and oppressed
By sad forebodings undefined;
A deep solicitous unrest
Had forced itself upon her mind.

XVI.

Her cousin John, two months that day,
Had come their welcome guest to be;
Brave, handsome, witty, genial, gay,
Rather a dangerous rival he.
Born in the South, for the "lost cause"
Four long and toilsome years he fought;—
The strife had been a dreary pause,
And his young life stern lessons taught.

XVII.

His father was the brother twin
Of Edith's mother, and therefore
Doubly endeared, ere Cain's dark sin
Of brother against brother bore

Death-dealing arms with sword and flame.
He, foremost in the battle strife,
A victim to his zeal became,
And in the conflict lost his life.

XVIII.

His mother died of grief, 'twas said,
When Peace her olive-branch displayed,
And buried discord with her dead.
John Winstone had not long delayed
His promised visit North; he knew
He would receive the warm embrace
That as their kinsman was his due,
And in their love would find a place.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

EDITH'S fond hopes proved all in vain,
Leon did not return again.
The judge, in his official way,
Condemned his slighting, cold delay.
He called his daughter to his side
And bade her steel her heart with pride;—
“You, a Von Emich, are above
The wrong imposed upon your love;
The fickle Frenchman, let him go:
Guard every look that none may know
You cared for him.

My darling child!
For many weeks you've scarcely smiled;
Go walk up through the mountain wood,
The morning air will do you good;

Thomas shall follow you anon,—
Give me a kiss,—one more ; begone !”

II.

With deep-drawn sigh her answer came :
“ Dear father, give me all the blame ;—
I drove him hence ; but I will smile,
My poor heart breaking all the while,
In penitence for that false pride
Which banished Leon from my side.”
She fondly kissed his frown away
And left, his wishes to obey.
Her father called her cousin then
And bade him walk through mountain glen
As gallant knight and guardian true,
Her steps to trace the forest through.
He had good motive when he said
That Thomas should be sent instead,—
A trusty servant growing old,
Unlike her youthful cousin bold.

Her kinsman she had shunned of late,
And blamed him for her altered fate.

III.

The judge observed her manner shy
And thought this stratagem to try,
Which he concluded would be best
To reconcile her to their guest.
John called his dogs and sauntered forth
(His skill as guide was not much worth);
The setters, in glad racing play,
Oft led his footsteps far astray.
Edith, in meditative mood
Seeking a solitary wood,
From beaten path had turned aside
Where rushed a torrent deep and wide,
A mountain stream the cliffs between
Meandering through a wild ravine;
The droning waters overleapt
A craggy height, and downward swept

In foaming spray-shower from on high,
Like web of floss dropped from the sky.

IV.

Blithe chorus of sweet melody
Trilled back in echoes glad and free;
Æolian harp notes, low and clear,
Enchantingly fell on her ear,
As if the birds with rival song
Their madrigal would fain prolong.
She paused and gazed with anxious eye
In hope her lover to descry,
Sighing, "My Leon will not prove
A recreant to his plighted love;
He will not leave me to atone
My hasty words. Could I have known
My folly as I see it now,
Unchanged had been love's sacred vow."

V.

She looked a wood-nymph standing there,
Bewildered by her deep despair,
When suddenly a call-note clear
Rang out upon her listening ear;
The loud halloo still nearer came,
Calling repeatedly her name.
Then instantly her cousin John
Appeared the boldest cliff upon.
“Halloo! Diana! sylvan maid!
For this fair chance I’ve dearly paid:
My dogs have wandered from the path;
I’ve left the stragglers in my wrath,
And let my fancy teach the way;—
It led me here. Sweet coz, I say!
Behold the doom of Tantalus,
To be so near and sundered thus.
I cannot scale the mountain-side,
Nor, like Leander, swim the tide.

Had I the wings of Mercury,
To my beloved I'd quickly flee."

VI.

"Cease, John!" she cried, in her surprise;
"A greater barrier 'tween us lies."
"Ah yes," he answered; "but why dwell
On past misfortunes? none can tell
What future years may have in store;—
Please, Edith, be yourself once more.
Joking aside, sweet coz, I fear
I have intruded coming here;
Has my rough humor been so plain
That it has blanched your cheeks with pain?"
Like athlete bold in swift descent
From crag to crag he nimbly went,
Till with a bound, all barriers past,
He landed at her side at last,
Beaming with health and exercise,
A merry light in his dark eyes,



"HER COUSIN JOHN APPEARED THE BOLDEST CLIFF UPON."



Quite undecided which, to tease
Or try his cousin's mood to please.

VII.

He said, "'Tis time we should return;
A sportsman's prize I fairly earn,
Not as a poacher came I here,
I must take home my uncle's dear."
She smiled to hear his sallies gay,
And followed on their homeward way;
His ringing laugh and chatty cheer
Fell like glad music on her ear.
The truant setters soon appeared,
With whining bark the brushwood cleared;
Their drooping, silken ears and tails,
Their crouching gait and plaintive wails,
And each imploring, upturned face,
Gave mute expression of disgrace.
When in their master's pleasant mien
No sign of anger they had seen,

They fawned on him in sportive play,
And bounded on the homeward way.

VIII.

The Gordon Scot was black as night,
The other brown bedappled white;
Two noble dogs, of setter breed,
Trained every glance to know and heed.
Edith admired the graceful pair,
Their supple limbs and silken hair;
She said, "How beautiful this Scot!—
So glossy black, and every spot
Of richest tan,—he's good and wise,
I know by his clear, speaking eyes."
John said, "I'll give the dog to you,
Edith; he'll prove a champion true;—
Here, Shot! down charge! allegiance give
To your fair mistress while you live."
She answered, "John, I thank you; no,
I've not the heart to treat him so;

Such friends devoted must not part,—
He understands,—’twould break his heart.”
John reassured her when he said,
“Be not by sympathy misled;
Shot is so jealous, he can’t bear
My love with even Grouse to share.”

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

ON mountain ledge of mossy stone,
Near where a rushing torrent strayed
Through gorges deep and ways unknown,
The gypsies their encampment made.
Sibyl sat gazing on the sky,
The planet influence to explore,
And solve the tangled mystery
In murmured words of gypsy lore.
Long sat she thus, her brow o'ercast
By gloomy omens that oppressed;
Then smiled and said, "I see; at last
Her weary heart will find its rest:
Ah! thankless task,
Why did I ask
This mystery to solve?"

Her planets rise
On clouded skies,
 And in their gloom revolve.
What do I care
If she be fair,
 Gentle, refined, and pure?
'Tis self must rule,
I am no fool,—
 Her fate she must endure.”

II.

She paused and heard the laughter gay
Of gypsies laden with their spoil,
Who sauntered up the rugged way
Singing blithe songs to lighten toil;
And, as they gained the craggy height,
Assum, their leader, gayly sung
A tribute to the shades of night,
That echoed the dark cliffs among.

And the ^{wild} melody's refrain

Prolonged the music, till the trees
From nightly slumber woke again
With foliage dancing in the breeze.

SONG.

We love the night
With star-gems bright,
When hooting owls we hear;
'Tis then we reign
O'er mount and plain,
Nor lords nor laws we fear.

Chorus.—Drink to the night!

When dawning light
Shall shift the darker scene,
We close our play
And hie away,
Away to the woodlands green.

When midnight flings
Her sombre wings
Over the sleeping town,

The gypsies rove
Through field and grove,
And seek their own renown.

Chorus.—Drink to the night!
When dawning light
Shall shift the darker scene,
We close our play
And hie away,
Away to the woodlands green.

III.

At their approach, with queenly smile
Sibyl received her loyal band;
For well she knew they would beguile
The weary hours at her command.
“Play timbrels, dance, and sing glad songs,
I fain would rest ere dies the night,”
She said, “for joy to youth belongs;
Your mirth will sadness put to flight.”
She drew her mantle o’er her breast,
On bed of moss with graceful ease

She sought and found refreshing rest,
While all conspired their queen to please.

SONG.

Drink to our queen !
The forests green
To her allegiance own ;
The mountains high
That kiss the sky
Her kingdom and her throne.

Chorus.—Sleep, sweet sleep,
Silent and deep,
Give to our queen.

She's good, she's great,
She reads our fate,
By her each line is told ;
Here's to her health !
Here's to her wealth !
In countless coins of gold.

Chorus.—Sleep, sweet sleep,
Silent and deep,
Give to our queen.

IV.

Ere the last note had died away
 Along the wild and deep ravine,
Of the sweet, soothing roundelay,
 In slumber soft reposed the queen.
The stars had paled in light of dawn;—
 All silent save the monotone
Of mountain torrent rushing on
 Forever, with its drowsy drone.
And while the gypsies take their rest
 We'll seek our heroine again,
Whose joyless heart, by love unblessed,
 Strove to conceal its blighting pain.

V.

John Winstone by his jovial glee,
 His witty sallies, courtly grace,
From every selfish motive free,
 Won flitting smiles to Edith's face.

For her he'd sing some melody,
Her harp responding to the lay,
That with transporting sympathy
Wafted her thoughts far, far away.



"In slumber soft reposed the queen."

Of all his songs, one pleased her best,
A ballad breathing love so deep
It touched the chord in her pure breast
Of hopes not dead but feigning sleep.

BALLAD.

A soldier from the battle din
Crowned with the wreath of fame,
The fairest, loveliest bride to win
O'er Ashley's borders came.

Chorus.—Fair Lena's brow was white,
Her cheeks like blushing shells,
Her eyes were sparkling bright,
And blue as Scotia's bells.

Her lips like rosy Cupid bows
To match the young god's dart,
Her pearly teeth would oft disclose,
When drawn by smiles apart.

Chorus.—She was divinely fair,
The soldier wooed in vain ;
She loved young Arthur Dare,
And ne'er would love again.

Her locks, like silken gold refined,
In sunny ringlets strayed,
Like beams of light, all unconfined,
Around her shoulders played.

Chorus.—She was divinely fair,
The soldier wooed in vain,—
She loved young Arthur Dare,
And ne'er would love again.

“Think not of him,” the soldier cried,
“For on the battle-field
Young Arthur fighting by my side
To naught but death would yield.”

Chorus.—Then hopelessly she cried,
“Arthur, my love! for thee
Thine own affianced bride
Will pine in misery.”

Then off he threw his ample cloak,
Disguise he cast aside,
In well-known accents fondly spoke,
“Lena! my faithful bride!”

Chorus.—One startled glance she gave,
Then fainted on his breast;
The true deserve the brave,
God their true love had blessed.

VI.

When they had finished the refrain
And all with compliments drew near,
Edith concealed her hapless pain,
Nor let one sign of grief appear.
The judge was satisfied and more
That such discretion she had shown,
With true Von Emich pride she bore
A sorrow that should not be known.
“Shot” was her escort every day;
He fondly followed her at large,
On rides or walks, with sportive play
And gallant pride in his fair charge.

VII.

One moonless night, when nature's breath
Suspended hung like sultry noon,

Edith a warning had of death,
A palsied dream, or trance-like swoon;
Of troubled fancies it was born
And gleamed from shadows of the night;



"She could not move, closed were her eyes."

Before the waking hour of morn
Appeared a figure ghostly white,—
One hand was pointing toward the wood;
The other to a crimson stain

Upon its breast;—awhile it stood,
As if its meaning to make plain.

VIII.

She could not move, closed were her eyes,—
Yet the strange 'spectral form of light
She saw in agonized surprise,
Until it vanished from her sight.
Then starting from her sleep, she cried,
“Am I awake? What means the blood
I saw upon the phantom's side?
This surely cannot bode me good;
And lives there one to do me wrong?
Was I awake? No! I have dreamed;
By grief disturbed, I am not strong,
Yet like reality it seemed.

IX.

“'Twas but a vision of my sleep;
My soul is sad and thus I dreamed.

Father in mercy gently keep

Thy erring child, unworthy deemed
To quaff her cup of earthly bliss.

Oh, grant my prayer! May heavenly grace
Protect my love; his doubts dismiss,

And sad remembrances efface!"

She nestled from her murmured prayer

Down on her pillow like a child;
Secure in God's paternal care,
With faith sublime, she sweetly smiled.

X.

Her soothing sleep, her tranquil rest,

Dispelled the phantoms of the night;
All fears that had her mind oppressed
The warm bright sunshine put to flight.

Refreshed from her long morning nap,

She found her mother, although late,
Awaiting her, puss on her lap,
Watching for crumbs beside her plate.

“My darling! you are pale to-day,”
She said to Edith. “You must eat;
You starve yourself (Flo, run and play);—
These strawberries are quite a treat.

XI.

“You tarried long in land of dreams;—
And yet your gallant cousin John
Is later than yourself, it seems.”
“Madam, the gentleman has gone
Out shooting partridge, if you please,”
Thomas respectfully replied.
His words set madam’s mind at ease;
For John in sporting took great pride.
She laughing said, “That will explain
The startling sound I heard this morn;
It echoed through my drowsy brain
Like tally-ho and huntsman’s horn.”

XII.

Edith determined not to walk
That morning, for she felt afraid
Of giving cause for silly talk
Between staid Thomas and her maid.
Then all at once, by impulse led,
She called for Shot his run to take,
And followed as he onward sped
To where the falls sad echoes wake.
Their walk had not extended long
Ere Shot at once grew wild with fear,—
Sure evidence that something wrong,
Some great calamity, was hear.

XIII.

He sniffed the air with plaintive wail,
Then urged her on to greater speed,
Or cringed and howled. She could not fail
The dog's great agony to heed.

“What ails you, Shot? I fear you’re ill,”
She said. “We will go home, *poor* Shot!”
He heeded not her gentle will,
And slowly crawled, as if he sought
Yet dreaded something in the wood;
Then his low whine was answered near;
The sound unearthly chilled her blood
With uncontrolled and boding fear.

XIV.

Shot was at once electrified;
Swift as an arrow on ‘he flew;
She quickly followed her wild guide
The tangled vines and brushwood through.
Up near the fall, its bank upon,
Composed as if he calmly slept,
Lay dead her princely cousin John.
The dogs their dirge-like wailing kept;
Edith at first transfixed with grief
Stood one brief moment, then she tried

To succor him, to bring relief,—
 Sadly she knelt down by his side.

XV.

Her kerchief o'er the wound she pressed :
 “Shot!—home!” she cried;—he understood,
And prompt to do her fond behest,
 Swiftly he bounded through the wood.
They found her gazing on the dead,—
 Gazing with deep despair and awe.
They deemed her crazed from what she said :
 “John, 'twas thy spirit that I saw
Draped in a flowing misty shroud;
 Blood-stains upon its bosom white,
Floating before me like a cloud,
 It vanished with the dawning light.”

XVI.

* * * * * *

“Who murdered our dear, noble John?
 Think you 'twas he?” The madam spoke;

“Where can he be? Where has he gone?

It is a deadly, crushing stroke
To the De Maurys; they are wild
With hopeless grief and bitter shame
That he, their loved, their only child,
Has this suspicion on his name.”

“They say a duel had been fought,”
The judge replied; “ill will he bore
His rival; but by more ’tis thought
Revenge has paid the deadly score.

XVII.

“It is most strange, for I have learned,
Before the murder Leon fled;
Had the base miscreant returned
Much scandal had been left unsaid.”
Edith had ventured from her room,
Where by her grief she was confined,
And overheard her lover’s doom
With burning ears and frenzied mind.



“HER KERCHIEF O’ER THE WOUND SHE PRESSED.”

“Father!” she cried, “this cannot be
 That you were saying;—you have erred;
 Leon from taint of crime is free;—
 Take back each cruel, unjust word.

XVIII.

“Leon loved me too well, I know,
 To so revenge himself on John;
 ’Twas I that caused this hapless woe,
 And at my bidding he has gone.
 Speak, father! all your words unsay;—
 They fought not, nor has Leon fled
 Like recreant from the fatal fray,
 Leaving his blood-stained victim dead.
 Father! be merciful to me;
 To please you I have ever tried;
 I come to sue on bended knee,
 No more sustained by my false pride.

XIX.

“Leon I loved, I love him still;
 My coquetry drove him away;

My girlish folly, wayward will,
 Would not relent to bid him stay.
Dear Cousin John read my poor heart;
 I thanked him for his tender care;—
No longer can I play a part
 In life's dull drama of despair.
I've faith in Leon,—he is true;
 His innocence I will proclaim;
Dear father, promise me that you
 In your high justice do the same.

XX.

“How stern you look! your trembling hand
 My brow has never chilled before.”
“Edith, 'tis hard to understand
 What you would have; pray say no more,”
The judge replied; “this triple woe
 Has made you not yourself to-day.
You're faint! some water! Gently,—so.”
 Like sculptured form of marble lay

Edith within her father's arms;
The grief upon her face impressed
Enhanced, idealized her charms,
While wrapp'd in her unconscious rest.



"Lay Edith within her father's arms."

XXI.

"My darling child! My precious one!
She never will awake again.

See what our heedless words have done;
 Why have we caused this crushing pain?
Oh, God! she's dead!" her mother cried,
 Wringing her hands in anguish wild;
And all in ministrations vied
 Ere Edith woke and faintly smiled.
Her lovely, classic, changeless face,
 Of purest alabaster white,
Found in her father's heart new grace,—
 He whispered, "Leon shall have right."

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

TIME with his leaden wheels rolled on
O'er Edith's heart, by grief oppressed;
The judge had many missions gone
In hope to calm her wild unrest,
Her deep solicitude.
Her wasted form and pallid cheek,
Her ever-watchful, anxious eyes,
Appeared amid the gloom to seek
Some ray of light that might arise,
Some harbinger of good.

II.

One night there raged a fearful blast,
The thunder muttered overhead,
The skies, with blackest clouds o'ercast,
The driving rain in torrents shed,
Warped by the wild-wind sweep.

Thör drove his bolts and clanked his chain,
Mocked by the echoes far away;
The lightning to the weird refrain
Danced in and out in fitful play,
As if to "murder sleep."

III.

There came a package to the door,—
Official papers sealed and tied;
A look of much importance wore
In their stiff covers, long and wide,
Bespattered by the rain.
The judge the document received,
Its contents scanned with studious care.
"Edith!" he said, "you are relieved;
This legal work you need not share,
'Twould only give you pain."

IV.

Foreboding evil filled her heart.
"Father!" she cried, "don't bid me go;

I feel those papers have a part
In my great grief that I should know;
Don't keep me in suspense."
The judge read twice the papers through
Ere he could frame his words to speak,
As if their purport to review;
The gentlest way he fain would seek
The bad news to dispense.

v.

"Read them!" she cried; "I have no fear;
My cup of grief o'erruns its brim."
"God give you strength, Edith, my dear!"
He answered. "They've arrested him;
For so the papers say."
"That is not all,—tell me the rest;—
See! I am calmer far than you.
Give me the papers;—it is best;
I am prepared to read them through;
Dear father! don't delay."

VI.

He read : “ ‘ Arrested De Maury
On the ship Vesper, bound for France ;
She had just cleared the port for sea ;
We found him by the merest chance,
And have him here detained.
Those who have known the young man well
And felt great interest in his case
Have paid him visits in his cell ;
He does not recognize a face,
Nor is his madness feigned.’ ”

VII.

“ Edith ! I would have spared you this ;
Let me conduct you to your room.
God bless you, darling ! One more kiss !
Take heart, we yet may lift the gloom ;
Light follows darkest hour.”
He left her with her drowsy maid,
Who marked Miss Edith’s altered face,

And instantly attention paid,
With thoughtful care and kindly grace,
To the fair, drooping flower.



“ He read : ‘ Arrested De Maury on the ship Vesper.’ ”

VIII.

Silent was Edith,—deepest grief
Had stilled her tongue; the tidings read
Contained so much, although so brief,
That with them hope at once was dead,
Like blighted bud of spring.

She gently waved Marie away,
Who answered, "Please, I cannot leave,
Mademoiselle; with you I'll stay;
I am afraid too much you grieve.
Shall I the madam bring?"

IX.

Madam Von Emich quickly came,
And, bending o'er her daughter fair,
She murmured softly her dear name,
Blended in a maternal prayer
That God would bless her child.
Her kindly words with love imbued,
Her soft caressing, gentle hand,
Her tender, fond solicitude,
Edith's sad heart could understand
Amid its tumults wild.

X.

Was it her mother's prayer sincere
That soothed to rest her troubled mind?

Or that the angels hovered near,
In holy ministrations kind,
That she so calmly slept?
Madam Von Emich watched awhile
Her dove, within her downy nest;
Watched till she saw a dream-born smile
Flit o'er the lovely face at rest,
Then turned away and wept.

XI.

Why did she ever rise again?
Why did the morning's rosy light
Bring naught to her but hopeless pain,
And sorrow's slow, death-dealing blight?
Why wake to misery?
What use had been the gypsy's charm,
The many-tinted amulet?
It had not shielded her from harm;
Accursed the day that she had met
That bane of destiny!

XII.

How dragged the hours in weariness !

Her self-conviction strong became
That Leon's madness and distress,
That brought disgrace upon his name,
Were caused by jealousy.

One little word that fatal night

Of explanation would have made
Leon her actions view aright ;

His maddened passion would have stayed
From its dark tragedy.

XIII.

They took her on the mission sad
To visit Leon in his cell.

She found him sullen, hopeless, mad ;—

She cried, " My love ! all will be well,
God give us strength meanwhile."



"HIS HANDS HE POINTING TOWARDS HER RAISED."

At her sweet voice he turned and gazed
One moment as if petrified;
His hands he pointing towards her raised;—
“Avaunt! thou lovely fiend!” he cried,
“With thy false luring smile.”

XIV.

He spoke in French, “I love her not!
How dares she speak of love to me?
On my fair fame there is a blot
From which it never can be free,—
I am condemned by fate.”
He turned away; nor would he deign
To look upon her once loved face,
Nor would he speak to her again,
But proudly waved her from the place,
And scowled with loathing hate.

XV.

They led her gently from the room
In mute, unutterable pain.

The madman's cell—that living tomb—
Was Leon's sentence to remain,
There without hope consigned.
To his sad parents Edith went
Daily, in sympathy sincere,
During their son's dark banishment;
Full well she knew the moments drear
Their lonely lives would find.

XVI.

Not once since that disastrous day
Had Edith walked in forest green;
The dogs neglected, hid away,
At first were scarcely to be seen,—
They would their kennels keep.
When Edith noticed them, their mood
Of sorrow passed and joy burst forth;
Her kindly care they understood,
And well she knew their faithful worth,
Their strong affection deep.

XVII.

The judge insisted she should ride
With mounted groom; then Grouse and Shot,
Watchful attendants, by her side,
Their recent sorrow all forgot
In their wild racing play.



“When Edith noticed them their joy burst forth.”

One morning, much to her surprise,
She felt new sense of happiness,

New light of pleasure filled her eyes,
And sorrow's sombre clouds grew less
That darkened o'er her way.

XVIII.

Her thorough-bred, Ben Bolt, a bay,
Sniffed the fresh air and cantered on
With dancing feet and easy sway.
Not far upon the road he'd gone,
When he at once stood still;
There, near the tree-embowered wood,
In her fantastic golden sheen,
The gorgeous gypsy waiting stood,
Like ancient Oriental queen
The web of fate to fill.

XIX.

"Lady, God greet thee! Many a day
Have I been waiting, to explain
What I have done the spell to stay
That mars thy youth, but all in vain—
It was thy destiny.

Through the long hours of yesternight,
I read thy planets o'er again;
The clouds are passing,—all is light;
Thy meed shall come from grief and pain,
Joy wreathes her smiles for thee.

XX.

“ 'Tis written,—six months from this hour
Thou shalt become a happy wife;
Bliss unalloyed shall be thy dower,
And children gladden love and life,—
Thy horoscope is read.”
When she received her fee of gold,
She said, “I thank thee, lady fair!
My face once more shalt thou behold;”
Then, like a meteor through the air,
From Edith's presence fled.

XXI.

Ben Bolt had stood as if a spell
Was wrought upon him, till she left;

His fine, arched neck began to swell;
With one impatient hoof he cleft
The fern and moss-grown mould;
Quivered his flanks with nervous dread,
His flickering nostrils wide became,
Nodded his restless, shapely head,
His ears alert and eyes aflame
With horror uncontrolled.

XXII.

The dogs had flushed a woodcock there,
And set him in the dingle shade;
Of the strange meeting unaware,
Attention to their game they paid
With silent watchfulness.
That interview renewed the pain
In Edith's breast; her pale, sad face
Could not its late bright glow regain;
No faith on gypsy lore she'd place
To lighten her distress.



"WITH ONE IMPATIENT HOOF HE CLEFT THE MOULD."

CANTO SIXTH

I.

“NEARLY four years have winged their onward
way,”

Edith soliloquized; “It does not seem
That I have lived; ’twas only the delay,—
The hope to waken from this dreadful dream;—
Total eclipse will make of morning night,
When shrouded in the shadows it will bring.”
She stood in her black robes, herself so white;
Etherealized was she by suffering.

II.

“Why should the anniversaries of grief,
Dull monitors, awake a slumbering woe?
The journey of our life is far too brief
To live again our sorrows as we go,”

The judge observed when Edith's form he saw,
As she her solitary musing kept;
And greeting her, he said, "By nature's law
I thought that you in morning dreams still
slept.

III.

"‘A dream,’ old Homer tells us, ‘comes from
God.’

If so, I can predict for you some good.
That I should dream at all is somewhat odd;
As I remember, it was thus I stood,
With you beside me, gazing at the moon;
Diana held her silver bow unstrung,
Late in the morning, near the brightest noon,
Her crescent pale among the sunbeams hung.

IV.

"The sky was brilliant with its sunny light,—
’Twas one of summer's warmest, brightest days;—
I said to you, ‘My vision can't be right;
Phœbus should hide Diana's borrowed rays.’

Delightedly you made reply to me,—

‘Father, I’ve wished; my wish I shall obtain;
When the new moon at mid-day we can see,
The sign portends that we our hopes shall
gain.’ ”

V.

“Papa, I thank you! ’Twas a vivid play
Of fancy,” Edith answered; “ne’er before
Have I believed my grief would pass away
And sorrow’s gloom enshroud my life no more.
’Tis not foreboding that I soon shall die;
But in the sunshine, in the morning air,
All nature with new beauty greets my eye;
My faith revives that God will answer prayer.”

VI.

And as they stood conversing pleasantly,
They heard the rumbling of a carriage near:
“So early!” Edith said, “Who can it be
At the De Maurys? Some one ill, I fear.”

A lengthened pause, and then a joyous scream;
She grasped his arm, and cried excitedly,
“ ’Tis he! ’tis Leon! Father, do I dream?
And is this but a mocking phantasy?”

VII.

Already near, he might have heard her speak;
Advancing quickly in his manly pride,
The flush of deep excitement on his cheek,—
A moment more and he was by her side.
“ Edith, my darling—my beloved—adored!”
Clasped in his arms she fainted on his breast,
But waking soon, to consciousness restored,
All fears dispelled, she knew her love was
blessed.

VIII.

He sat with them, still clasping Edith’s hand,
As if afraid to trust her from his sight,
And told his story: “When at your command
I rushed off madly, that tempestuous night,

I met a friend of mine about to leave
For France, to aid his countrymen at war;
Then came the thought that I could make you
grieve,
Nor scrupled I your happiness to mar.



“Edith, my darling—my beloved—adored!”

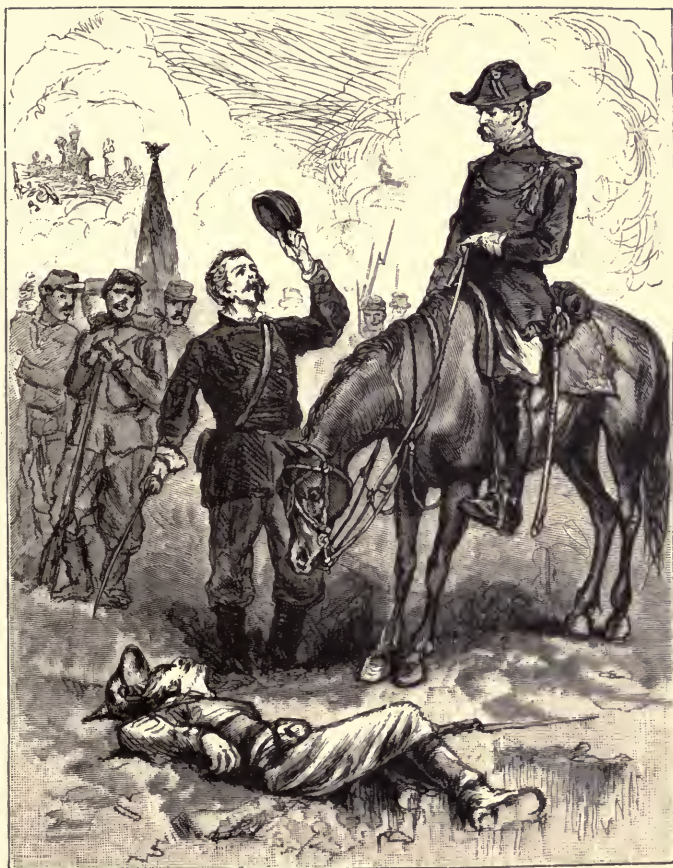
IX.

“That you would grieve I hoped; I took delight
In your remorse and torture; you would feel

Yourself the cause; unmarked, I fled by night,
My heart by jealousy grown hard as steel;
I joined the army; fighting did me good,
Hardship soon softened my revengeful ire;
High in my general's favor soon I stood,
And won the fame that soldiers most desire.

X.

“The star and cross I gained. When Peace
once more
Spread her soft pinions o'er the spoils of war,
I yearned to visit my dear native shore
And slighted loved ones, in that land afar.
I sought and found my relatives in France;
They told me there the very strangest tale.
My aunt received me in a swooning trance;
I thought her dead, she looked so cold and
pale.



"HIGH IN MY GENERAL'S FAVOR SOON I STOOD."

XI.

“ When she revived, ‘ Louis ! my child ! ’ she cried ;
‘ My darling ! darling boy ! noble and brave !
Sadly for you we’ve mourned ; we thought you died
In distant land, or found a watery grave.’
Then both caressed me in so fond a way
I could not breathe, so great their ecstasy,
Until at last I found the voice to say,
‘ There’s some mistake ; I’m Leon de Maury.’

XII.

“ ’Twas hard to make them credit me,—at last
They both exclaimed, ‘ If what you say be true,
On a dark mystery a light is cast :
Louis, our son, is suffering for you.’
Then from a paper crumpled, old, and torn,
I read in French what you too well must
know ;
Nearly four years my name had Louis worn ;
My folly meted him the direful blow.

XIII.

“Then came back on myself all I had schemed,
And grim remorse for my revengeful pride
Oppressed my heart. Poor Louis’ fetters gleamed
Like haunting phantoms ever at my side.
His parents and affianced bride are here;
Impatient in their love they came with me.
Pauline’s devotion Louis’ heart will cheer
When he from unjust bondage is set free.”

XIV.

He scarce had ended, ere he heard his name
Called by his mother in her gentle way:
“Ah, truant! how you slight our older claim,
That you at love’s behest so long delay!”
She greeted Edith with affection deep.
“Leon,” she said, “they wait at home for you;
Asylum bars their prisoner must not keep,
When you the bolts so quickly can undo.”

XV.

When they had gone, the judge in merry mood
Exclaimed, "Dear Edith, tell mamma my dream;
And let its meaning so be understood;
Visions prophetic through my fancy gleamed.
I'm not poetic with a frenzied mind,
Nor superstitious, nor astronomer;—
Edith, my darling, in its reading find
That once a dream of sunshine did not err."

CANTO SEVENTH.

I.

THE old asylum stood alone
In which poor Louis was confined;
A massive pile of granite stone,
Where strength and beauty were combined.
His room the best; a trailing vine
Stranded the window bars between,
And fragrant flower of eglantine
Peeped blushing 'mid the foliage green.

II.

He just had finished his repast,
And musing sat in revery;
Little he dreamed 'twould be the last
Of prison life that he would see.

He sighed, "They all believe me dead;
They cannot know my unjust doom,
Buried alive," he sadly said,
"In this my hapless, lonely tomb."

III.

"Dear Louis!" were the words he heard
Through his half-open casement low.
"Listen!" he cried, "my mocking-bird,
The only one my name can know."
The bird was hanging near his chair,
With ruffled plumage chirping clear;
His plaintive note rung on the air,
When Louis' voice he chanced to hear.

IV.

Then, from the casement as he turned,
His yearning gaze on distant view,
Familiar faces he discerned,
And forms appeared that well he knew.

'Twas fortunate that timely glance
Prepared his mind for future weal;
Sometimes unlooked-for pleasures chance
To break the heart they come to heal.

V.

No words can paint the blissful scene,
The rapture unrestrained and wild,
That marked the meeting there between
The parents and their long-lost child.
Leon and Louis wondering gazed
Each at the other's face awhile;
Both were surprised, perplexed, amazed,
Nor could resist a puzzled smile.

VI.

"Louis," said Leon, "love and war
Are themes that we will not dispute;
While you were pent by bolts and bar
In Gallia's cause, your substitute,

I fought, and God preserved me whole.
Nor have I dimmed your noble name;
I think I your advancement stole,
Beside your star and cross of fame,

VII.

“Marked ‘L. de Maury;’ here they are.
The cross I keep in penitence;
Take this, ’tis yours,—the jewelled star!
For prisoned years small recompense.
’Tis all made plain,—I understand
The cordial greeting I received
From the brave general in command,
Rendered to you as he believed.”

VIII.

Then Louis’ mother whispering said,
“Pauline is here, unchanged and true;
While we all mourned for you as dead
She hopefully awaited you.”

“Mother!” he cried, “oh, do you mean
Those words?—‘unchanged and true’ to me!
She here! My own beloved Pauline!
Oh, God, can this be mockery?”



“Oh, God, can this be mockery?”

IX.

“Many the letters I have sent,
Nor would I she my doom should know;
Quite sure am I my letters went,—
At least the doctor told me so,—

But never came an answering word ;—
Vainly I strove the cause to trace ;
I thought my sad mischance she heard,
And I had fallen from her grace.”

X.

He paused awhile, and then reviewed
The dire mishap that brought him there,
That had declared his hands imbrued
With blood ; his anguish, his despair,
And all his lonely prisoned years ;
Then, banishing oppressive thought,
He dashed away unbidden tears
And said, “ My bliss is cheaply bought.

XI.

“ Our ship had scarcely touched the shore
When the exciting news I learned
That France against all Prussia bore
Offensive war ; my valor burned

To join my regiment again.

I took my passage that same night;
And when detained, my rage and pain
My reason nearly put to flight.

XII.

“Nor dreamed I that my face and name
Had living counterpart so true;
That as your double I became
The substitute, Leon! for you,
While you for me great hardships bore,
During the cruel siege of France;
Thank God! the tragedy is o’er;
Past gloom our present joys enhance.”

XIII.

Edith at once must sympathize,
On her first meeting, with Pauline,
Whose earnest, anxious, dreamy eyes
Shadowed the sorrow she had seen.

Pauline knew Edith's story well,
Pictured by Leon's partial tongue;
Of her great beauty he would tell,
Her truth and virtues all he sung.

* * * * *

XIV.

'Twas morning, brightest of the year;
Edith beside her casement stood,
When all at once who should appear
But Sibyl, genius of the wood.
Edith waved her a mute command;
Unushered, quickly by her side
The gypsy came. She took her hand
And said, "God bless thee, lovely bride!"

XV.

"To solve the mystery I came
That clouds upon thy life have cast;
The death of one whose honored name
Lives in sad memory of the past.



"EDITH BESIDE HER CASEMENT STOOD."

'Twas accidental:—in his sport
His gaze on distant game intent,
He fell, and at his gun's report
I quickly to his succor went.

XVI.

"It was too late, quite dead he lay:
The shot had pierced his young heart through;—
I lifted him, yet dared not stay:
'Twould be unsafe. Lady, I knew
Our race adjudged to be a bane;
Had I my knowledge then made known,
That he by accident was slain,
Guilt on the gypsies had been thrown.

XVII.

"This is thy wedding day foretold,
Dispelled is now all boding gloom;
Nor could I longer from thee hold
The secret shrouded in his tomb;

My tingling blood made known to me,
The morning on which first we met,
The part mysterious destiny
To me in thy misfortunes set.



“Farewell! thy horoscope is told.”

XVIII.

“A sacred wish was granted me,
The boon of grace to bless thy life:

From sorrow evermore be free,
Wedded in love, an honored wife.
Thrice, lady, I thy path have crossed;
In gypsies' queen no foe behold:
Kind words to us are never lost;
Farewell! thy horoscope is told."

THE END.

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